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LETTER

FROM

ROBIN,

OF

Notable MEMORY,

meaning Lord Oxford

To his Friend

The Occasional Writer.

meaning L^d Bolingbroke

L O N D O N:

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LETTER

FROM

R. O. B. M.

OF

THE O. B. M. O. B. M.

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A
L E T T E R
F R O M
R O B I N,
O F
N o t a b l e M E M O R Y, &c.

Styx, Feb. 21. 1726. O. S.

Dear H—y,

IT is a very great Aggravation of the Evils we suffer here, that we are often obliged to take Cognizance of what passes in your World. It is impossible to tell you how much it whets our Remorse,

morse, to trace the Marks of Ingrati-
 rude, Cruelty, Dissimulation, Trea-
 chery, Falshood, and all the long
 Train of Vices, by which we were
 actuated when alive, and for which
 we suffer now we are dead. Without
 further Preface, I will inform you,
 that it is full six Weeks since two
Committees were ordered to examine
 Facts, and prepare Evidence for your
 Trial; the one is charged to enquire
 into your Conduct and Actions as a
 private Man, and the other in Qua-
 lity of *Minister*; and they have Pow-
 er to send for Persons, Papers, and
 Records. From this I conclude, that
 we may very soon expect you here;
 for such I find, upon Enquiry, has
 always been the Practice a little be-
 fore the Arrival of any illustrious
 Criminal. Upon these Occasions,
 the *Committees* of Examination con-
 sist of such as knew the Party best
 when alive, whether they were then
 his *Peers*, or *Countrymen*, or not.
 Thus

Thus I am *President* of that which sits on you as *Minister*; on my Right is your Friend *Matt*, with his G — of H — — n, the D — of S — — and his *Excellency*, the R — R — — my Lord P — S —. Opposite to whom, are *Mons. le Comte de Tallard*, *Mesnager*, *Mons. de Torcy*, and *Mons. le Duc D'Aumont*. The other *Committee* for the Examination of your *private* Life, consists of such as were either *Pimps*, or *Buffoons*, with whom I have no Acquaintance.

You will expect no doubt, that our Report should be very favourable, since we are all your particular Friends; but it unfortunately happens, that we are obliged to tell Truth, because if we did not, it would certainly be found out; for *Radamanthus* is an exquisite Sister, and upon the least Appearance of Inconsistency, he is sure to bring us upon a cross Examination, which always

ways ends in our own Shame and Punishment. Thus Facts are stated with such Candour and Simplicity, that Truth is never obscured ; the Consequence of which is, that Tryals are always short, and generally speaking, as soon as the Report of the Committee is read, the Court acquits the Prisoner with Applause, or he, struck with the Glare of his Iniquities, confesses himself guilty without cavilling, and submits to his Sentence. You will not want to be informed what you were to expect from the Persons abovementioned, obliged as they were, not only to examine and give their Opinions of the Evidence that was offered them according to their best Lights, and the *personal* Knowledge they had of you ; but likewise to tell all they knew themselves, without any Equivocation or Reserve. It was very unfortunate for you, upon this Occasion, that we all happened

ned to die before you. Without *me* it would have been almost impossible to have discovered the true Springs of many of your Actions: *Matt.* explained several Hints scattered here and there in your Letters, which at first sight appeared broken and confused, but illustrated by him, became the strongest Characteristicks of your Genius and Intentions: *Torcy* furnished the Key to several Cyphers, which it would have been very much your Interest not to have had explained: *Tallard* and *Mesnager*, painted the happy Disposition they found in you to favour their Master's Interest, and were modest enough to own they had acquired the Character of dextrous Negotiators very undeservedly; for it seems, you met them half way in all they proposed; tho' by certain Stipulations you took care to make for your self, it appears you wanted neither Caution nor Pru-

B

dence,

dence, when you were pleased to exert them. The D. of S— and the R — R — justified the *Report* of the *Secret Committee* to the *House of Commons* in 1715, with Relation to the *Negociations of Peace at London, Paris, and Utrecht* : His G— of H——n declared you were the Man that inspired him with Thoughts of bullying the Q—— when he drank to all her *Father's Beams*, and swore if she would not be reconciled to J——y, he'd set up in S——d for himself ; *D'Aumont* informed us of many Particulars that had hitherto been only known to you and him, and diverted us extremely with a Description of the *Fright a certain Person* was in upon the burning *Powis House*.

Of the Crowd of Witnesses that have been examined upon this Occasion, *Mons. l'Abbé Gaultier*, has done you the greatest Prejudice;

dice; he has not only vouched to the several Memorials that passed through his Hands, but has given us a very exact Detail of several Negotiations carried on by his Canal, in Favour of the P——; which it seems you did not think proper to commit to Writing. *Matt.* is of Opinion that what *Gaultier* has said will bear very hard upon you, unless you find something or other that may invalidate his Evidence; which he is in Hopes you will be able to do, if what you writ to him of the 25th of *Sept.* 1711, be true, that the *Abbot* was ready to *for swear* Himself about the Passport relating to the *Griffin*: A Circumstance that, fairly proved, will certainly do you great Service on this Occasion.

The Affair of *Catalonia* has been discuss'd, from the Year 1705, that C—w receiv'd Instructions to treat



with the People of that *Principality*, to the time they fixed up his *Credentials* to the *great Altar*, praying Vengeance against those who had *over-ruled* the *Q—'s Conscience* to their Ruin. Several venerable Persons came and described the great Alacrity with which the *Principality* of *Catalonia* first engaged to oppose *Philip*, depending on the good Faith of *England*, and the Promises that had been so solemnly made, never to abandon them. Others appeared, who had behaved eminently during the War; One brought undeniable Proof of having raised entire Regiments for the Service of the Allies; another, that he had laid out his whole Fortune to support the *English* Troops in their greatest Extremity. To these succeeded a Crowd of meagre *Ghosts*, Witnesses of the fatal *Catastrophe* of *Barcelona*; from which unhappy Period they had groaned out a miserable

rable Life, dispersed in the Prisons
 of *Spain*, and equally oppressed with
 Chains and Famine. These upbraided
 the *hard-hearted Admiral*, who
 was subpæna'd on this Occasion,
 with want of Humanity, and Deaf-
 ness to the moving Remonstrances
 made to him by the City of *Bar-
 celona*, in her great Extremity; and
 he threw the blame on you and I,
 lamenting at the same time the hard
 Fate of Officers, who are often ob-
 liged to act against their Consci-
 ences, or see themselves cashiered,
 and reduced to Beggary. I have been
 the more ample on this Head, as
 it was the Circumstance that affect-
 ed me with the greatest Remorse
 in the whole Course of our En-
 quiry.

It would be endless to recapitulate
 all the Evidence that has been given
 against you.

You

You will be put to justify your Contempt of the Memorials that came from *Holland*, when our separate Measures were first discovered there.

There are many Things that bear hard upon you in my Representation to the *Queen* of the 8th of *July*, 1714; some I have softned that were thrown in to serve my own Interest at that Time; others I have been obliged to corroborate: In a Word, when the Report was closed, which was about a Fortnight ago, there was no Room to doubt of your Fate, and all the good Company, except *Matt.* and *my self*, seemed pleased with the Prospect of having you amongst us; but we who know you best, are of Opinion, that the Horrors of this Place would be heightened by your Company: And therefore, in Compassion to ourselves, as well as to you,

you, we subjoyned an Article to this Effect. That whereas of all Those who made up the *Committee*, we were the last that left the World, we thought ourselves obliged to declare, that we had heard it credibly reported, and did verily believe, that since your *Flight* into *France*, you had done many Things, and made several Discoveries in Favour of your Country, which if fairly stated, might possibly ballance the foregoing Treasons specified in the Report, but that we were not qualified to set those Matters in a proper Light, having had no Share in publick Business whilst they were transacted. I have the Pleasure to acquaint you, that *Radamanthus* approved our Candour, and ordered me to dispatch a Courier to let you know, that it would import you extreamly to produce authentick Proofs of all your Transactions of this Kind ; and it is his Advice as well as mine, that you apply
to

to the *Secretary's* Office for Copies of all your Dispatches, certified by the proper Officers; which is a Favour that will not be denied you if you ask it with Humility, and declare the Use you intend to make of Them, and the Service they will do you on this most important Occasion. I can likewise give you the Consolation of knowing, that whatever you can bring of this Sort, will be very candidly allowed upon your Trial in Abatement of what is offered against you; for the Maxim, *Nunquam sera est ad bonos Mores Via*, is no where better understood than here.

And thus, my dear *H—y*, I should have ended a Letter which cannot but be disagreeable to you, were it not that the little Hope I had entertained of your Deliverance, is in a Manner defeated upon the Arrival of one of our Couriers from *London*, who has brought us Two Pamphlets of yours, which

which have appear'd under the Name of the *Occasional Writer* ; the last of which promises a Succession of several more, as Occasion requires, or as you find yourself in Humour. The Courier informs us, that the whole Town is taken up with descanting on these Writings, which he says, are almost unanimously disliked, for the Things they contain, and are still more odious for coming from you : Such a Step as this, it seems, was wanting to compleat your Character, which could only have been rendred worse, by your Endeavours to distress an Administration, to whose Mildness and Clemency you stand so much obliged. In a Word, no Body approves, he says, but a few black Spirits, who are ever pleased with finding Fault, and constantly disposed to obscure those Virtues that are above their Imitation.

C

For

For my Part, *H—y*, I should be very far from giving my self any Trouble about what you do or what you say, did I not fear that the Guilt you have incurred on this Occasion, and which will be accumulated as you proceed, will weigh down any Merit you might derive from your late Behaviour in France, and consequently bring you hither ; which is the Thing of the World I apprehend most.

It is merely therefore with a View to prevent This, that I have given my self the Trouble of reading over your Letters, and that I am now at the Pains of writing you my Thoughts of Them.

I shall take no more Notice of the personal Reflections you have thrown out upon a certain great Man, than to tell you, that you ought to repent, and be ashamed of them, as Things
that

that are as foolish, as they are ungrateful and untrue. Believe me, *H—y*, Dirt thrown by you will not stick : So low are you fallen in the Opinion of Mankind, that even a Falshood, a well calculated Falshood, which coming from an indifferent Person, would have been catched at *Rebound*, and bandied through the Nation ; broached by you, looses its Credit, and falls flat, like an Arrow shot against a Mud-Wall. But in the Name of common Sense, what could you intend, where you say ?

*“ That it was foolish for a Man to
 “ trust to one single Expedient of
 “ Government, who had several in
 “ his Power, and especially to such
 “ an Expedient as that of Money,
 “ which would equally serve to sup-
 “ port Him, or to hang Him.”* Do not mistake me, *H—y* ; I am not angry with you, for calling Money an *Expedient* : It is not only an *Expedient*, but the very Soul and Life-

Blood of Government ; but my Quarrel to you is, that you should tell an *English Minister*, he has several *Expedients of Government* in his Power. In *France*, indeed, and other Countries, where the *Will of the Prince* is the *supream Law*, the *prime Ministers* have many *standing Expedients of Government* ; and are no doubt very great Encouragers of Those, whose Talents are most happily turned for the Invention of new Ones. Thus a *Regiment of Dragoons*, the *Bastile*, the *Rack*, a *Lettre de Cachet*, *Bulls*, *Pardons*, *Excommunications*, the *Inquisition*, and the *Bow-string*, are all *Expedients of Government* ; but the *British Constitution* will admit none of These ; and a Man must be shameless that could insinuate the Use of Them At reading the Paragraph abovesited, your Friend *Matt.* burst into a loud Laugh, and cried, Lord ! how is poor *H——y's* Head stuffed with *Foreign Politicks* : So have I known

known many Persons, who by conversing long abroad, have forgot the Idiom of their *Mother Tongue*.

I shall be more particular in my Examination of the latter Part of your Letter; where there are several Things insinuated with great Cunning and the most inveterate Malice, that have not the least Foundation in Truth.

You say, *England acts such a Part as no Nation never acted which was not betrayed; or whose Ministers were not infatuated*. But I, who since I came to be a *Spirit*, am able to penetrate further, both into the Intention of Actions, and the Consequences that will arise from them, than any Mortal living, can assure you, that *England* never acted so safe and so glorious a Part; and believe me, dear *H—y*, the End of all this Bustle will convince the World of the Truth
of

of the old Proverb, *Imperator Maris, Terra Dominus*. This very Morning I talked with an intelligent *Spaniard* lately arrived here, who had in his Life-time, a large Share in the Management of the publick Affairs of his Country ; and this *Gentleman* owns, that the *Conduct* of the *Spanish Court*, at this Juncture, is utterly inconsistent with the true Interest of the Nation ; and, which is more material, he says, there is not a *Spaniard* of common Sense in the Kingdom, but is convinced of this, and breaths Revenge against the present Administration, which sacrifices, say they, the *Good* of the *Nation* to the *Ambition of a Woman*, and the Interest of the *elder Branch* to that of the *younger*.

This *Gentleman* acknowledges, that in Case of a War, *England* would be able, by the Superiority of her *Fleet*, both to intercept the Money that should be

be sent from the *Spanish Indies*; and, *à Contra*, to hinder *America* from being supplied with *European Commodities*; which would probably occasion the *Revolt* of those Countries: An Event that would make *old Spain* the most inconsiderable State in *Europe*.

Count —, who is lately arrived from *Vienna*, and knew the Scene there perfectly well, assures me, the *Imperial Court* has been a long time convinced, that the Execution of the *Treaty of Vienna* is impracticable; that the *Emperor* repents heartily that he ever granted the *Ostend Company's* Charter, and that he would not ballance a Moment to revoke it, if an *Expedient* could be found to save his Honour, after the high Language that has been held by his Ministers. The Count indeed seems to apprehend, that the Difficulty of finding such an *Expedient* may occasion

casion a War; but he says that in all human Probability, a single Campaign will determine the Dispute, and that the Impossibility of continuing the War, will be urged to silence the Clamours that will be raised by the Proprietors of the *Ostend* Company's Stock, when they find themselves abandoned.

You will easily perceive that these *Gentlemen* were in the secret of Affairs. It is confessed on all sides, and indeed it is evident, that the Execution of the *Treaty of Vienna* is become impracticable, only from the Opposition made to it by *Great Britain*; and as the Intention of that Treaty tends directly not only to ruin the *English East-India Trade*, but likewise to sap and undermine all the most valuable Branches of Commerce possess'd by that Nation, her *Assiento Contract*, and the Exportation of her *Woollen Manufactures*

tures to *Spain*, and the *Spanish-Indies* ; to *Germany* and the *Netherlands* : It will follow by an undeniable Consequence, that the *English Ministers*, instead of betraying the Nation, or acting like Men infatuated, have done their Duty, and must deserve the Thanks of their Country, for having penetrated into those Designs that were formed to ruin it, and diverted their Effects. Sure it is as vain as malicious, for you to insinuate that *Great-Britain* has done too much, because it may be the Interest of other Nations to oppose the *Allies* of *Vienna* with the same Vigour ; for though this should be true, yet *Great-Britain* could only oppose them with Success, and she has not done too much, because any Thing less had been insufficient for the Ends proposed. And indeed, *H—y*, when I reflect how prodigious a maritime Power the *Dutch* had in the last Century, when with such Obstinacy they contested the *Dominion* of the narrow Seas with *England* ; and that *France* has since been able singly to cope with the combined Fleets of *Great-Britain* and *Holland* ; I cannot

D help

help thinking it the greatest Glory to the *English* Nation, and her greatest Happiness too, that she alone was able, at such a Crisis, to fit out three Royal Squadrons, of Force sufficient to give the Law in as many different and distant Parts of the World.

Of all the Parts of your Letter, I conceive the greatest Displeasure at the odious Parallel you draw between the present Engagements of *England* and *France*, and those that subsisted between the Two Crowns when *Charles II.* broke the *Triple Alliance*. Is there no Difference then, between a Convention *purely defensive*, made in Opposition to the vast inveterate Designs of *Spain*, and the House of *Austria*, Designs that tend to raise an *universal Monarchy* in *Europe*, upon the Destruction of the Possessions and Privileges of other Nations; and an *offensive Alliance* calculated expressly for the Ruin, and indeed for the Extermination of an honest industrious People, ever the faithful Ally of *England*, and whose Ambition never extended to disturb the Dominions, or the Rights of any of their
 their

their Neighbours ? Can there be a Parallel between the present Engagements made for the *Defence* and *Support* of former *Treaties*, and those enter'd into by *Charles II.* in direct *Violation* of the most solemn *Leagues* and in *Breach* of the most sacred *Oaths* ? And lastly, is there no Difference in the Circumstances of the Two Reigns which you think fit to compare ? And is it the same Thing to act in Quality of Pensioner to a Neighbour King, and the Slave of his Ambition ; or to be chief in the Alliance, the Arbitrer of *Europe*, and the great Assertor of universal Right, of general Peace, and impartial Equity ? But it was always your ill Luck, *Hi——y*, to be most mistaken when you were most malicious.

There is one Particular in your Letter, which I should never have expected from a Man, whose Darling Aim it has ever been to be thought a consummate Judge of Politics and foreign Affairs ; and when you reflect, I believe you will think it a Slip ; and that you have made too great a Sacrifice of your Prudence

to your Inveteracy. This is, where you say, that in Case of a Treaty, *not only France, but Holland likewise, must be against us in that important Article of Gibraltar and Port-makon; and that the late Duke of Orleans, as dear a Friend as he was to us, insisted strenuously that we should give up the Places beforementioned, pretending a Promise to this Effect, and Himself obliged in Honour to see this Promise performed.* I must inform you, that to my Sorrow, Lord S—— who has been charged with making this Promise, and I, do not inhabit the same Region; so that I could not be informed by him, whether he made such a Promise or not; but I have had the Honour of seeing his *Royal Highness* since I had your Letter, to whom I explained the Paragraph above-cited, and begged he would tell me whether you had done him Justice or not in his own Particular, and what he thought of your Assertion in General. His Answer was candid and open; and very different from what he would probably have given in his Life-time. He began with telling me, he would not
take

take upon him to determine positively what *Lord S——* had said at *Madrid*, but he believed he had not made any *absolute Promise*, tho' he might well be supposed to have given the *Spaniards* some *Hopes*; and that this was perhaps the Method he took to engage them in that senseless Expedition to *Africk*, which was so ridiculous an Error, and the *Spanish Court* was so sensible of it, that it was no Wonder they pretended a Promise from *Lord S——* for the Restitution of *Gibraltar*, and *Port Mahon*, which they would have us think the the Price of the *African Expedition*; especially since *Lord S——* is dead, and there is no Body to disprove them; for dead Men are always in the Wrong. As to his own Particular, he said, that perhaps to serve his Interests with the Court of *Madrid*, he might at one time or other, have ordered his *Ministers*, in Appearance, to second the Demands of *Spain* for the *Restitution*; but that this was very well understood in *England*; and that he always knew his own Interest too well to insist upon it in Reality.

It

It was evident, he said, that his chief Interest, and his only Aim, was to secure the *Succession* of the *Crown* of *France* in his *Family*, in Case *Lewis* the 15th should die without Issue Male; and as in that Case the *King* of *Spain* could only trouble or dispute that *Succession*; so the *King* of *Great Britain*, was the only Person that could effectually support him and his *Family* in it; which he had a Right to do as *Guarantee* of the *Renunciation* made by *Philip*, the present *King* of *Spain* at the *Treaty* of *Utrecht*: Wherefore he said, it would have been a Peice of the most stupid Folly and Madness, for him to have weakned his best Friend, in Favour of one who might come to be his greatest Enemy.

As to the *Dutch*, his *Royal Highness* said, it was notorious that their *Trade* to the *Levant*, and the *Mediterranean*, was one of the most important Interests of their *State*; and therefore it was impossible they could wish to see *Gibraltar* and *Port Mahon* wrested out of the Hands of the *English*, from whom they might always

ways promise themselves a kind and hospitable Reception, whenever they should be under a Necessity of making either of those Places their Retreat. And with Respect to the Opposition which you say the *Dutch* made to our Negotiations at *Utrecht*; he said with a Smile, that *You* and *I* were much better acquainted with the true Reasons of that Opposition than himself; but that he believed they did not so much oppose our *separate Privileges*, as our *separate Peace*; and, added he maliciously enough, if *Monsr. St. J—n*, and your *Lordship* had not had other *separate Business* to do, which would not permit you so conveniently to go Hand in Hand in the Business of the Peace with the Rest of your Allies, it is not to be doubted but *England* might still have had better Terms. At these Words, the Force and Truth of which no Body can be so sensible of, as you and myself, you will not wonder if I own to you, I was in the utmost Confusion, and took my Leave of his *Royal Highness* somewhat abruptly.

In

In a Word, *H—y*, there is not one Assertion true in your whole Letter, and but one Thing even plausible; which is, where you express your Fears that *France* should again grow too strong upon the *Rhine*, and in the *Netherlands*; but sure the Point will admit of no long Debate, whether it be more eligible for *England* to let the *French* extend their *Barriers*; or tamely suffer the *Emperor* to usurp her Commerce, and by degrees grow powerful enough to invade *Great Britain* at his Pleasure.

Thus, Dear *H—y*, I have finished what I think proper to say upon your first Letter; my Thoughts of the second, I must defer sending you 'till the next Ordinary, contrary to my Intention when I sat down; but I am summoned. Farewel,



H—y.

F I N I S.